

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-03

INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

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R 030900Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3791

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEAN OCON, E

SUBJECT: FIRST ASEAN PUBLIC RELATIONS CONGRESS, MARCH 28-31

REF: MANILA 0475 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: THE FIRST ASEAN PUBLIC RELATIONS CONGRESS HELD IN MANILA ON MARCH 28 TO 31 WAS A SUCCESS NOT ONLY FROM THE PUBLIC RELATIONS POINT OF VIEW BUT ALSO FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE SPEECHES BY PROMINENT GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS LEADERS. SECRETARY ROMULO USED THE OCCASION TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE SECOND US/ASEAN MEETING WILL BE HELD IN JULY IN WASHINGTON AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER. PHILIPPINE BANKER DAVID SYCIP MADE A STARTLING PROPOSAL THAT ASEAN SHOULD OFFER PREFERENCES TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN A "CROSS COMPLEMENTATION" SCHEME, AND ALSO SUGGESTED THAT ASEAN SHOULD BE RENAMED THE ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, THEREBY EVOKING A REPOSTE

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FROM MRS (MABASSADOR) ROSARIO MANALO THAT ASEAN WAS NOT ONLY ECONOMIC BUT ALSO CULTURAL AND SOCIAL. ANOTHER SPEAKER AROUSING SPIRIATED AND INTERESTED REACTION WAS AMCHAM PRESIDENT GEORGE SUTER WHO REMINDED THE AUDIENCE THAT AMERICAN INVESTORS HAD A STAKE AND INTEREST IN GROWTH OF ASEAN AND OFFER THEIR COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

2 THE FURST ASEAN PUBLIC RELATIONS CONGRESS WAS OPENED ON MARCH 28 BY MRS. IMELDA MARCOS, WHO SPOKE IN A HOARSE VOICE AS A RESULT OF ACTIVE POLITIKING IN THE CURRENT ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. OPENING SESSION WAS ATTENDED BY ABOUT 200 PERSONS, ABOUT A QUARTER OF WHOM WERE FOREIGN PARTIAL-PANTS FROM OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES, JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA. THERE WAS NO REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE PUBLIC RELATIONS SOCIETY OF AMERICA, BUT A TIME MAGAZINE REPRESENTATIVE (CHARLES D'HONAU) FROM TOKYO AND LOCAL AMERICANS ENGAGED IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING ATTENDED. BESIDES GEORGE SUTER, GERRY BOYLE OF GENERAL MOTORS WAS ALSO A FEATURED SPEAKER AND MADE A STRONG DEFENSE OF MULTINATIONALS.

3. KEYNOTE SPEAKER WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN INDONESIAN VICE PRESIDENT ADAM MALIK, WHOSE SPEECH WAS READ IN HIS ABSENCE BY AMBASSADOR SOEDARMONO. SECRETARY ROMULO DELIVERED THE CLOSING REMARKS AND USED THE OCCASION TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE SECOND US/ASEAN MEETING WILL BE HELD IN JULY IN WASHINGTON AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF PRESIDENT CARTER. PRESS GAVE EXTENSIVE COVERAGE TO THE CONGRESS, PARTICULARLY TO THE SPEECHES BY DAVID SYCIP AND GEORGE SUTER.

4. RIZAL BANK PRESIDENT DAVID SYCIP, WHO IS SOMEWHAT OF A GADFLY BUT WHO IS RESPECTED FOR HIS INITIATIVE IN DELIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MOLISHING SACRED COWS AND STIMULATING DISCUSSION, MADE A STARTLING PROPOSAL THAT ASEAN OFFER PREFERENCES TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES IN "CROSS COMPLEMENTATION." THIS MEANT AN EXTENSION OF THE ASEAN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEMENTATION CONCEPT TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES THAT WOULD SUBCONTRACT PART OF THEIR INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION TO ASEAN. SYCIP SUGGESTED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT A JAPANESE AUTO MAKER MIGHT GET PREFERRED ACCESS TO ASEAN MARKETS FOR ITS CARS IF IT AGREED TO BUY ENGINE BLOCKS FROM INDONESIA. THE NEXT DAY DATUK AMAR HAJI ABDUL TAIB MAHUD, MALAYSIAN MINISTER OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, TALKED ABOUT "AN ASEAN CAR" WHICH WOULD ENCOURAGE "CROSS INTEGRATION" OF INDUSTRIES IN THE REGION. (COMMENT: AS IS THE CASE WITH ASEAN THEORETICIANS, SYCIP'S SUGGESTION POSTDATES EXISTING MULTINATIONAL COOPERATION BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR, WHILE AN "AIAN (SIC) CAR" WAS A FORD IDEA. FOR EXAMPLE, TRANSMISSIONS MANUFACTURED IN THE

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PHILIPPINE BY ASIAN TRANSMISSION (A MITSUBISHI/
CHRYSLER/YULO JOINT VENTURE) ARE ALREADY BEING EX-
PORTED TO JAPAN AND OTHER ASEAN COUNTRIES. END COMMENT).

5. IN ANY CASE, SYCIP'S SUGGESTION PROVIKED LIVELY DIS-
CUSSION AMONG THE CONGRESS PARTICIPANTS. SYCIP ALSO
SUGGESTED A REGIONAL BOARD OF INVESTMENTS, A LIMITED
ASEAN PAYMENTS UNION, ASEAN-BASED TRADING COMPANIES,
AND ASEAN-BASED MERCHANT BANKS. FINALLY, SYCIP SAID
THAT ASEAN SHOULD BE MORE PRECISELY CALLED THE ASEAN
ECONOMIC COMMUNITY SINCE ITS BASIC OBJECTIVE WAS AND
SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT OF THE
MEMBER COUNTIRES AS WELL AS THE REGION THROUGH ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT.

6. AMBASSADOR ROSARIO MANALO REPLIED TO SYCIP THAT IT
WAS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE ORGANIZATION TO BE CALLED
THE ASEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY SINCE IT WAS NOT ENVISIONED
AS AN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY LIKE THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC
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COMMUNIY. SHE ALSO ASKEDRHETORICALLY, "WHAT GOOD ARE
GNPS IF THERE IS POLITICAL UNREST"? FURTHER, SHE SAID,
THERE ALSO ARE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF ASEAN.

7. IN A SHORT BUT DIRECT SPEECH, GEORGE SUTER PAID

TRIBUTE TO THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF ASEAN BUT REMARKED ON THE ABSENCE OF PARTICIPATION BY FOREIGN INVESTORS IN THE DISCUSSIONS OF ASEAN DEVELOPMENT PLANS. HE STATED CLEARLY THAT "THE AMERICAN INVESTOR IS A GENUINELY INTERESTED PARTY WHO HAS A STRONG DESIRE TO SEE ASEAN PROSPER. IF AMERICAN INVESTMENT AND TRADE IS CONSIDERED BENEFICIAL AND DESIRABLE, LET US BE ALLOWED TO PLAY A HELPING PART." HIS PRESENTATION EVOKED MUCH INTEREST FROM THE AUDIENCE AND RESULTED IN A LONG QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD. PRESS COVERAGE OF HIS TALKS WAS EXTENSIVE, ALTHOUGH THE DAILY EXPRESS, AND THE TIMES JOURNAL TREATED HIS OFFER OF MULTINATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE AS A REQUEST AND A COMPLAINT. TEXT BEING FURNISHED ADDRESSEES.

8. COMMENT: MOST OF THE OTHER SPEECHES CONCENTRATED ON THE PUBLIC RELATIONS ASPECT OF ASEAN -- HOW TO DEVELOP AND PROMOTE THE IMAGE OF ASEAN. THE SYCIP AND SUTER SPEECHES, HOWEVER, GAVE SUBSTANCE TO THE MEETING, AND THE FIRST ASEAN PUBLIC RELATIONS CONGRESS IS ANOTHER OF THE MANY, INCREASING ASEAN MEETINGS WHICH IN THEMSELVES BRING THE ASEAN NATIONALS TOGETHER AND DEVELOP THEIR COMMON INTERESTS AND IDENTITY. ALL THAT SAID, SYCIP STILL HAS THE LAST WORD. HE THINKS ASEAN CONCENTRATES TOO MUCH ON RHETORIC AND DECLARATIONS OF PRINCIPLES. IN THE BEGINNING OF HIS SPEECH, ADVISING ASEAN TO COME DOWN TO THINGS MORE CONCRETE, SYCIP SAID -- "WHEN YOU WANT TO HAVE AN AFFAIR WITH A GIRL, YOU JUST DON'T TELL HER YOUR LOVE HER IN PRINCIPLE. YOU TALKS ABOUT SPECIFICS LIKE WHERE, WHEN, HOW AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOMETIMES -- HOW MUCH."
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